SEAS AT RISK

for the protection and restoration of the marine environment

NGO priorities for environmentally sustainable aquaculture in the EU

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The opportunity

- Aquaculture can be environmentally responsible.
- Important steps have been made to improve the sector's environmental performance
- EU aquaculture is better regulated than most uncertified aquaculture outside Europe
- Increasingly environmentally-aware seafood consumers = opportunity for the development of innovative, healthy seafood products in an environmentally and financially sustainable aquaculture industry
- Aquaculture can be profitable and sustainable - they are not mutually exclusive.

BUT – still several concerns!

Sea At Risk activities on aquaculture

- Joint NGO position paper: priorities for environmentally sustainable aquaculture in the EU
- SAR policy paper: Ensuring sustainable aquaculture feed ingredients
- Workshops for NGOs
- Creating European Advisory Council together with producers and other stakeholders
- SAR members: fish guides, working with consumers and retailers

NGO key asks:

1. Define sustainable aquaculture principles through a stakeholder process, translate this into measurable targets and indicators
2. Address gaps in data and knowledge and develop policy-relevant indicators
3. Minimise environmental impacts – use of chemicals and medicals, link feed-fisheries, escapes, disease management, biodiversity and ecosystem impacts, eutrophication...
4. Improve aquaculture governance: integrate environmental legislation, ensure public participation - ensure ecosystem based planning and management framework, integrate– N2000, WFD, MSFD, MSP, SEA, EIA
5. Innovation: Support the development of multi trophic aquaculture and aquaponics
6. Use public funds to support public goods, e.g. data collection, research, balanced stakeholder engagement, monitoring.
7. Promote environmentally sustainable trade at the global level

European Court of Auditors 2013 report: The effectiveness of European Fisheries Fund support for aquaculture

- the EFF provided over 400 million euro to fund measures for productive investments in aquaculture, as well as environmental and health measures.
- the Court found that the EFF did not offer effective support for the sustainable development of aquaculture.
- How can we ensure that the EMFF overcomes these shortcomings?

Court's recommendations to the EC/ EMFF

- when approving Member States' operational programmes, consider whether objectives for the sustainable development of aquaculture are realistic and appropriate, and whether support is targeted at measures which are likely to address those objectives; Definition and targets for sustainable aquaculture are still lacking
- establish guidelines for the consideration of relevant environmental factors when determining public funding; EC's strategic guidelines are mainly about cutting red tape and weak on environment. Guidance on MSFD/WFD only out now
- ensure, where relevant, that Member States' operational programmes are only approved if appropriate national strategies for the development of the aquaculture sector are prepared;
- encourage Member States to implement relevant spatial planning and to simplify the licensing and administrative procedures to support the development of the aquaculture sector; MSP Directive: weak on environment – ICM dropped out (crucial for coastal aquaculture)
- improve the comparability of the statistical data on aquaculture compiled from its different sources, in order to enhance its accuracy and completeness. – ongoing DCF regulation negotiations: should include all marine.

Court's recommendations for MSs

- prepare and apply coherent national strategies for the development of the aquaculture sector;
- implement relevant spatial planning, and simplify the licencing and administrative procedures to support the development of the aquaculture sector; Sectoral spatial planning runs counter ecosystem based approach. Still SEA/EIA problems. Time line of MSP is different
- ensure that public funding is prioritised towards projects which best contribute to the sustainable development of aquaculture and provide value for money; Annual plans and OP more geared to subsidies for production, should go to public good (eg data collection)
- monitor project results more closely by setting and applying relevant indicators. – we need to agree on a common set of policy relevant indicators

Work of EC till date

- Strategic guidance for sustainable aquaculture – mostly about cutting red tape - not strong from env point of view
- Cefas study with stakeholder involvement nice exercise – but belated guidance on link with MSFD/ WFD – and did not include link with feed
- Definition of SD needed, with targets, data, indicators to form the basis for an independent EU assessment
- Data Collection Framework: needs to address environmental data needs for all aqua sectors (some countries pushing to exclude fresh water aqua)
- We need a more holistic and ecosysten based view. There are LIMITS TO GROWTH! We need to consider demand management

Work of MSs till date

- Multi annual aqua plans and OPs – as based on guidance - not strong from env point of view - see environment as a barrier. Targets and indicators coordination?
- Plans also failed to link the delivery of public goods and aquaculture production subsidies from the EMFF. Most plans were aiming to have the sector dependent on these subsidies. This is making the same mistake of past funding in the fisheries sector and something that the fund itself has been trying to move away from.
- MSP – integrated ecosystem based approach – not sectoral one
- Poor implementation of MSFD, N2000, WFD, EIA, SEA

WE WILL NOT HAVE GES 2020! So how can we say we have sustainable aquaculture?